

The Parliamentary Committee of Inquiry into the motion-picture industry opened its hearings on the 18th May, 1948, and since then a considerable volume of evidence has been submitted to the Committee, but its work is not yet completed.

The Film Industry Board, comprising the Chief Inspector of Films and representatives of this Department, the film exchanges, the chain-theatre group, and the independent exhibitors, has continued its work as an advisory body in the settlement of problems affecting the motion-picture-exhibiting industry in this country. The annual election of two members to represent the independent exhibitors on the Board is conducted by this Department.

Since the peak of paid admissions to pictures and receipts was attained in the year 1934-44 there has been a recession to the extent shown in the following table :—

	1943-44.	1944-45.	1945-46.	1946-47.	1947-48.
Paid admissions to theatres ..	38,256,659	35,520,450	36,965,771	*	34,078,349
Gross receipts	£2,803,086	£2,588,111	£2,817,646	*	£2,634,730
Average charge for admission	1s. 5·6d.	1s. 5·5d.	1s. 6·3d.	*	1s. 6·6d.

*Not available.

SECTION 4—GAS-MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

The Board of Trade (Gas) Regulations 1924 are administered by the Department with the aid of technical staff employed by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

Production of gas in New Zealand reached a new record of 14,960,000 cubic feet in 1948. In 1938 the volume was 11,350,000 cubic feet.

Regular tests are made at the larger gasworks for calorific value, pressure, and presence of sulphuretted hydrogen by gas examiners who are fully qualified scientists on the staff of the Dominion Laboratory. All gas-meters are tested by Inspectors of Gas-meters before installation at consumers' premises.

With a few exceptions, the calorific value has been satisfactorily maintained by the twenty-two works under supervision. Two important exceptions were Auckland and Petone, but in both these cases new plant has recently been installed. The position at Auckland is now satisfactory, and an early improvement at Petone is anticipated.